

## Tips - Converting Application Documents to .pdf Format

The Online System for Clerkship Application and Review (OSCAR) requires any documents uploaded to the system to be in .pdf format.

- *All documents uploaded by applicants and recommenders to the system must be in .pdf format.*
- *Cover letters and recommendation letters created in the OSCAR online editor are not affected by this change.*

What is .pdf format? The term .pdf stands for Portable Document Format and captures the formatting information from a variety of desktop publishing applications (e.g., Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, etc.). The .pdf format allows OSCAR users to upload formatted application documents so that they will appear on the computer monitor and/or printer as they were intended.

Why the change to .pdf format? During OSCAR's first year, documents were uploaded in various formats and OSCAR converted these documents to the .pdf format once they were uploaded. The conversion process was cumbersome during the last two weeks in August due to thousands of documents being uploaded to the system at any given time, and some users encountered formatting problems in their application materials once the conversion was made to their documents. For example, resumes that contained certain non-standard fonts were not recognized.

There are several methods and resources available that OSCAR users can use to convert their documents to .pdf format. (Please note that the judiciary does not endorse any specific software application that converts documents to .pdf format.)

- Some word processing programs already have the ability to allow users to publish a document to .pdf format directly. **For example, documents created in WordPerfect can be converted to .pdf format by selecting "Publish to PDF" under the File menu located at the top left side of the screen in WordPerfect.**
- For OSCAR users who use desktop publishing program that do not convert to .pdf, there are many companies that provide software or web-based services to convert files to .pdf format for a modest price or even for free. **Users can quickly find such companies by conducting a search on the Internet that includes the terms "PDF" and "convert."** The results of such a search will provide the user with many options to convert a document to .pdf format.

### **Tips for Formatting Documents Prior to .pdf Format Conversion:**

- We recommend that users use basic standard fonts in their application documents prior to converting to .pdf format.
- Avoid formatting resumes that list the employers, employment location and or employment dates to the far right margin. See example below:

#### **AVOID:**

U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia  
333 Constitution Avenue  
Washington, DC 20001

June 2000 - April 2001

#### **RECOMMEND:**

U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia  
333 Constitution Avenue  
Washington, DC 20001  
June 2000 - April 2001

- Reminder that OSCAR has a 300kb file size limit for any document uploaded to the system.

Please Note: The OSCAR Help Desk is not able to provide .pdf format conversion support.